

## Introduction

Despite the fact that the month of May finds us, Argentinians, in a context of political defunding of education, especially that at university, the articles here published prove the commitment, resilience and critical stance of our education workers. In this issue you will find a reflective article, a research article and four really varied classroom accounts that have taken place in higher education, three of which depict English teaching practices carried out in Argentina and one describes a Spanish teaching experience in the United States. While these articles deal with seemingly disparate topics, such as foreign languages policies, role-playing, gender, academic literacy, local history and the use of photographs, all of them share the demand for a critical educator at their core, an educator who listens to his/her students' voices, is aware of their cultural backgrounds, needs and professional goals and one who sees them as persons in their differences and commonalities.

In the reflective article “Sobre navíos y naufragios: ¿De dónde deriva la hegemonía del inglés?” Juan José Arias replies to an article written by Montserrat & Mórtola (2023). He holds that education policies in the field of foreign languages in Argentina are not adrift and that English hegemony in the educational system is not set by default but due to coordinated linguistic policies, thus inaction turns into a deliberate act. He also claims, against what the authors state, that colonial discourses are still rooted in some English teaching and learning practices.

In her research article, “Exploring the development of oral skills and social competences through role-plays in an English language subject in higher education”, María Martínez Lirola explains that, through the observation of students' performance and questionnaires collecting their opinions, she found that her students acquired social competences, increased their interaction and improved their speaking skills by participating in role-plays.

Verónica Piquer tells us about the curriculum revision experience she led at Río Cuarto University, involving the integration of the epistemic, political and ethical dimensions of gender perspective in “Revising the EFL curriculum through the lens of a multidimensional gender perspective”. Carolina B. Panza, Laura Gonzalez Vuletich, Romina Picchio and Anabella Dichiara, also from Río Cuarto University, share with us a pedagogical sequence for raising undergraduate students' awareness of nominalization as a powerful resource to enhance their academic reading and writing skills in “Academic Literacy in English: A Pedagogical Proposal for the Teaching of Nominalization in an Undergraduate Program”.

In the Global South, on a very local note, Vanesa Polastri socializes her 2023 teaching sequence at higher education around the anniversary of the restoration of democracy in our country (1983) in “40 years of democracy in Argentina: A decolonial didactic sequence about our last dictatorship in the English class at Social Work College”. The article also discusses the difficulty educators find when intending to deal with Argentinian matters in English, with regards to identity construction and the selection of materials in the target language. In the Global North, on the other hand, Laura Levi Altstaedter introduces the use of Photovoice in a Spanish as a second language class in the USA to enhance oral communication skills, as is explained in “El uso de *Photovoice* en el aula de lenguas extranjeras para promover la autorreflexión y el desarrollo de la comunicación oral”. As the author asserts, *Photovoice* invites students to talk about photographs they have taken or looked at and inquire about points of view, becoming aware of intercultural matters, and developing self-knowledge.

After these brief lines about the content of this issue, you are invited to write and submit your manuscripts. Do not forget that in November we are publishing our Special Issue on Language for Specific Purposes: “Building and researching tailor-made courses and projects in different scenarios”. You can make your submissions for the special issue section until September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. However, if you cannot make it before the deadline, remember that we receive submissions all year round and your article can be published in a future issue.

We are immensely grateful to our reviewers and copy editors who contribute to the journal pro-bono to support its open access quality. Thank you, Francisco Zabala, Gonzalo Espinosa, Magdalena Zinkgraf, Mercedes Pérez Berbain, Reina Himelfarb and Susana Ibañez, for your hard work. And, talking about Susana Ibañez, our former editor-in-chief, there are not enough words to express our gratitude for all the years dedicated to leading the AJAL editorial team. We also want to thank the loads of work done by Flavia Bonadeo, another dear former co-editor, in these past years as she had to leave us to engage in new professional challenges.

We hope that you enjoy this issue’s articles and that they make you rethink about the role of language policy makers, educators, teachers, teacher-trainers, and students as critical agents, not only in their situated educational practices but in their communities beyond the university, college or school contexts.

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